

Returning to Work

You can be successful with breastfeeding and returning to work! All it takes is a little planning.

Here are 15 tips that may help with your transition back to work:

1 As soon as you can, discuss with your employer a plan for expressing your breastmilk. A flexible schedule, which allows time to express your breastmilk in a clean, comfortable and private location, is really all that is necessary.

2 Explore the possibility of a gradual return to work (beginning midweek or starting back part-time or job-sharing). This may help with success in the early days of breastfeeding and working.

3 Make a trial run a few days before the actual event. At this time, look at the room you will be using and make sure it has an electrical outlet if you will be pumping. Also, make sure there is a refrigerator available for storing breastmilk and a sink for washing your hands and pump supplies. (Breastmilk can be stored in a community refrigerator such as in a lunch room. Label containers and/or keep in a bag).

4 Try to arrange child care at or near your work. Find someone you trust who is supportive of breastfeeding to care for your child. Consider cooperative strategies such as sharing child care.

5 Allow at least two weeks to prepare for the time when you will be away from your baby. Express at least once a day and save your breastmilk for your care provider to give to your baby.

6 Nurse your baby before you leave for work and as soon as you can when you pick up your child or arrive home.

7 Make it clear that you do not want your care provider to feed your child right before you pick him or her up or before you arrive home.

8 Make yourself comfortable before you begin expressing your milk. Try to use some relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and thinking about your child. Sometimes it is helpful to bring your baby's picture, blanket or special toy to work to help you relax.

9 Wash your hands before expressing your breastmilk.



"Being able to take my son to work has made it easier to continue breastfeeding. I know that won't always be the case but it is important to me to continue. As I watch my son grow and stay healthy from the nourishment of my milk, I would never think of letting the obstacle of work stop me from providing that perfect food."—Kelly, mother of four-month-old Kai

10 Bring an insulated container to transport the breastmilk you collect.

It is important to clean your breast-pump and collection bottles *after each use*.

11 Try breastfeeding only and avoid bottles and formula when at home. Consider providing extra nursing time at night, days off, weekends and before and after work to help you keep a good milk supply.

12 Get plenty of rest, and eat extra food and drink to maintain your health. Your diet should be well-balanced and include lots of fruits, vegetables, carbohydrates and fluids.

13 Consider sleeping with your baby. This helps both you and your baby get more rest and makes nighttime nursing easier.

14 Form a support group with other working women who breastfeed.

15 Remember that some breastmilk is better than no breastmilk.



"When Shawn returned to work, breastfeeding made it easier for us to work together to continue to provide the best nutrition for our daughter."—Thomas, father of three-month-old Marlie



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